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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9611

INFO RUEHDL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 2138

RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 6469

RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 0293

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1347

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RHEFNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 000108

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR, IO, NEA, ISN, P, L

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/08/2019

TAGS: PARM MNUC PREL IR SY CY

SUBJECT: MONCHEGORSK: DECISION ON DISPOSITION "WITHIN 2-3 DAYS"

REF: A. NICOSIA 104

1B. BRYZA-FRIEDT EMAIL OF 2/6/09

Classified By: DCM Jonathan Cohen, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Status of Vessel: The M/V Monchegorsk moved slightly further from shore on February 7/8. An RoC diplomatic source claimed the vessel had relocated to keep from blocking Limassol port traffic. A maritime official cited the vessel's dangerous cargo and the need to maintain distance between the Monchegorsk and other ships. Informing the latter's account were recent media stories on the release of the Iran Sanctions Committee's interim response to Cyprus's request for guidance -- the February 8 headline of English-language "Cyprus Mail" read "Ship Carries Banned Weapons, UN Says."

12. (C) Diplomatic Activity: At 1445 hrs local (0745 DC), Ambassador telephoned RoC Diplomatic Coordinator Leonidas Pantelides. Pantelides confirmed the Monchegorsk remained in Limassol, although it had had to be moved a short distance to keep it from stopping port activity. He expected a final RoC decision within two or three days. Cyprus might still order the vessel to proceed to Malta; more likely, however, the government would decide to confiscate the cargo.

13. (C) Ambassador praised the latter possible course of action. If Cyprus were to confiscate the cargo with aims of disposing it, the USG would stand ready to lend technical assistance. In any case, it would be critical to obtain a complete inventory before Cyprus moved to destroy the goods. Pantelides again demurred on the offer of technical assistance, but confirmed the RoC must look into every container, "so that we know what we are dealing with.⁸

14. (C) As of local 00B, Embassy contacts at the Czech and German Embassies had not received instructions for a Monchegorsk-related, February 9 EU-3-plus-Presidency demarche on Foreign Minister Markos Kyprianou (Ref B). Four hours later, the Germans reported they had received a message from Berlin. Owing to the EU ambassadors' other demands, the call likely would not occur until February 10, and might drop to Pantelides's or Deputy FM Nicolas Emiliou's level. Czech Embassy sources too reported a late receipt of instructions from Prague. They added that details of the demarche would be finalized at the February 10 Political and Security Meeting (PSC) in Brussels.

